

Hallowell

4287

A

DISCOURSE

DELIVERED AT

H A L L O W E L L,

AT THE

OPENING OF THE

A C A D E M Y

IN THAT PLACE,

MAY 5, 1795.

K.

By ALDEN BRADFORD, A. M. S. H. S.

PASTOR OF THE CHURCH IN POWNALLBOROUGH.

— Ingenuas didicisse fideliter artes

Emollit mores, nec finit esse feros.

OVID.

Les lettres nourrissent l'ame, la rectifient, la consolent.

VOLTAIRE.

Many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall be increased.

DANIEL.

I AM THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

JESUS CHRIST.

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MDCCXCV.

DISCOURSE

OF THE

ARTS



IS A I A H XXXV. 1.

"THE WILDERNESS AND THE SOLITARY PLACES
SHALL BE GLAD—AND THE DESERT SHALL RE-
JOICE AND BLOSSOM AS THE ROSE."

IMPROVEMENTS in society, whether relating particularly to morality, or to the arts and sciences in general, must be contemplated with satisfaction and delight. We reflect with pleasure upon the circumstances of those, who are in civilized life, enjoying its conveniences and blessings, in contrast with those, who have not emerged from the barbarism of uncultivated nature. Compared to the wild waste of the solitary wilderness and unfruitful desert, to the unsheltered situation of savage man, who knows not the aid of the friendly arts to promote enjoyment, it excites sensations most pleasing, to view fertile, flourishing countries, improved by the plastic hand of culture, and to observe the many happy means, which have been discovered and adopted for ameliorating the condition of humanity. Where once extended the dark, lonely forest, the gloomy haunt of fierce, savage beasts, and of more fierce, more savage men, how delightful to behold the verdant fields, obedient to the exertions of inventive industry, clad in all the variegated beauties, which cultivation gives, and prolific for the enjoyment of its noble proprietor; and to see villages, towns and cities rise for the convenience and happiness of polished man! —

But

But agreeable as it is to observe inanimate nature improved and improving, and the condition of mankind ameliorating in reference to the means of sensual enjoyment—the cultivation of the mind, its exertions and attainments, and the progress of science, with its happy tendency to soften the manners and to exalt the character of man, will certainly be contemplated with greater and more refined satisfaction.— As it is by the faculties of the mind, that we are enabled to investigate, to arrange and to operate with delight, and thus to discover our superiority to the material world, intellectual acquirements and improvements serve more particularly to dignify and bless mankind; and must therefore be noticed with superior pleasure. We hastily turn from the humiliating spectacle of ignorant man in a state of savage nature, and delight to view him in the dignified character, to which he attains by the improving aid of science and philosophy. Deficient in useful and ornamental knowledge, unacquainted with the laws of nature, and thus the easy dupe of error and superstition, his situation excites disgust and regret; and we are pleased to see him emerge from this abject state of comparative degradation, enlightened and improved by intellectual researches and the acquirement of important truths. —

Our satisfaction is yet greatly heightened, when we consider the increase of religious knowledge, and when we find the character of man, freed from the deformity and ferocity of vice, improved by the nobler science of morality, and regulated by the sublime principles of true theology. When we view the moral world, obscured and disordered as it has been by sin, the greatest reproach of man, it gives joy inexpressible

possible to reflect, that there are means, and some instances of renovation to order, dignity and happiness.

That there have already been such improvements in degree, and such change from a state of ignorance and rudeness to circumstances of comparative refinement, is evinced by the history of mankind. That still greater improvements shall take place, is the prophetic declaration of inspired scripture. —

Ever since the deluge, from which æra more than four thousand years have elapsed, the sons of Noah have been cultivating the face of the ground, and their industrious exertions have improved it to those purposes of convenience and enjoyment, for which it was evidently designed. Nor have they neglected to improve themselves by science. In almost every succeeding age, knowledge has been increased, and discoveries have been made in the laws of nature, which are useful and improving to man. With some partial interruptions, we trace the progressive footsteps of constant improvement. —

Moral science has also been advanced. By the observations and investigations of some superior minds, but especially by direct revelations from heaven, many important truths have been ascertained of happy influence to reform the manners of men, and instructing us in the attainment of the greatest good—true and lasting happiness. —

Above all, by the Christian religion, the last, best gift of heaven, a great part of mankind have been enlightened, improved, sanctified. Already we have noticed its peculiarly happy tendency to promote these

these important purposes. Wherever Christianity has shed its purifying, heavenly light, it has dissipated the mists of besotting ignorance and pernicious error; and though it has not produced full reformation in all those, to whom it has been made known, we have sufficient evidence, that it is the most effectual means to improve the world. From its past improving, happy effects, we are induced to hope that it will prevail yet more; and we anticipate with assurance the glorious æra, when being universally acknowledged, it shall diffuse moral light and truth, and benevolence and peace throughout the habitable globe. Then will be realized these sublime predictions of the inspired prophet,—“ The people shall be all
 “ righteous—the earth shall be full of the know-
 “ ledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea—
 “ Nation shall not lift up sword against nation, nei-
 “ their shall they learn war any more—They shall
 “ not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain—Vio-
 “ lence shall no more be heard in thy land, wasting
 “ nor destruction within thy borders—The wilder-
 “ nefs and the solitary place shall be glad for them;
 “ and the desert shall rejoice and blossom as the rose—
 “ The parched ground shall become a pool, and the
 “ thirsty land springs of water—And a high way
 “ shall be there; and it shall be called the way of
 “ holiness—And the ransomed of the LORD shall re-
 “ turn, and come to Zion with songs and everlast-
 “ ing joys upon their heads: they shall obtain joy
 “ and gladness, and sorrow and sighing shall flee a-
 “ way.” —

“ Sweet is the harp of prophecy.” It describes
 future

future "scenes of accomplished bliss," and exhibits the world of mankind in an improved, happy state, far beyond what has ever yet been known.—But pleasing and edifying as it might be, it is foreign from my present design, to treat particularly upon the subject of prophecy. Let it be observed, however, that it is evident to those, who have attended to this sublime subject, that the great events, which have taken place for many hundred (I might say, thousand) years, tending to the improvement of mankind, were previously declared by prophetic inspiration. Many predictions, which describe a still more improved state of things, remain to be accomplished. —

But the divine revelation, with which we are favored, does more than to predict and describe the improvements, which have taken place, and which will in future take place, in the world. It imparts light and truth to promote such improvements : And it must be acknowledged by those, who consider the subject attentively and impartially, that Christianity is of most happy tendency and effect to meliorate the condition of mankind. —

This is not merely probable from attending to the doctrines of the Christian revelation : It is made certain by experience and by facts.—It is fact, that wherever Christianity has not been made known, mankind have been under great mistake respecting some important truths in morals, and have been debased and distressed by the frightful apprehensions of superstition. It is fact, that Christianity communicates knowledge upon many moral subjects, which were matter of great uncertainty to human philosophy

phy, and has freed men from many shameful and hurtful practices, which are known in heathen countries. It is fact, that Christianity is friendly to the interests of literature and the exertions of genius—that genuine, unadulterated gospel truths have most prevailed with the prevalence of true philosophy—and that the greater part of the most learned men, who have lived since the publication of the gospel, have professed faith in it ;—have given the reasons of their belief, and have shewn that no law of nature or principle of philosophy is contradictory to its sublime, consoling doctrines. —

The ignorant Fanatic may, indeed, decry all human learning, and assert, that Christianity needs not the aid of reason or philosophy. It is his policy, to avoid detection in his gross absurdities.—We admit, that the Christian religion is not supported wholly by *means* of human literature. “ It stands in the power of God :” And he will support it by *means*, which he shall choose. But this we say, that since miracles have ceased, by means of which it first made its way among men, it becomes us to examine into the evidences of our faith : and though, to satisfy ourselves, we may find witness sufficient by comparing its doctrines with our own internal feelings—yet, in order to convince the unbeliever and to answer those, who may enquire of us the reasons of our faith, it is most important that we should be acquainted with ecclesiastical and common history, and have knowledge of the means, by which the gospel has been propagated in the world.—By a knowledge of the principles of true philosophy, of the ancient languages, of the opinions and customs of former ages, of
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the history of European nations and of their Asiatic neighbors, and by examining the events, which are the fulfilment of scripture prophecies, we are enabled to give proof convincing of our holy religion to the unprejudiced enquirer, and to confute, if not prevent, the insidious objections of the sneering Sceptic. And except the unlettered Enthusiast will give me evidence of his miraculous ability, I must insist, that learning be cultivated, as a *mean* of supporting and propagating the gospel. —

Christianity, we observed, is friendly to the interests of human literature and to the exertions of genius. This is necessary to be considered, to remove the objections of some caviling Freethinkers, who boast of their superior penetration, and who, notwithstanding the happy effects of Christianity in enlightening and improving the world, have the effrontery to say, that it has been of no advantage to man, and has only served to cramp the native energies of the mind, and to cherish the fears of gloomy superstition.—In reply to this ungenerous and impudent insinuation, it would be sufficient to refer to what has already been observed—and history certifies the observation—that men, whose minds were greatly improved by philosophical researches and acquirements, after critical enquiry, have readily embraced the Christian religion and gloried in their profession: That Christians have generally been zealous supporters of literary institutions, often the founders of them: That they have most carefully cultivated ancient literature, and preserved to the world the writings of men of former ages, by which we become acquainted with their manners, sentiments and improvements

provements in philosophy: And that Christianity, by the revelation of moral truths, has freed the world of many *really* superstitious, and false opinions, and prevented many practices equally disgraceful and destructive to mankind.—Judging by analogy, then (be it observed) it is exceedingly probable, that those very persons, in modern times, who speak lightly of the Christian revelation, had they not been favored with its heavenly light, would now have been in the grossest ignorance, and “ trembling with fear of ghosts and witches, spells and enchantments.” —

Christianity is, indeed, “ the light of the world.” It gives moral light far superior to what has ever been communicated beside, and which many wise men of former times most earnestly “ desired to see.” Compared to this divine system, all other religions are deficient and erroneous. It disabuses the character of God of many unworthy, unjust imputations, which have been supported by ignorance, and it affords knowledge certain and infallible to guide erring man in the way of eternal life. —

The great design of the gospel is, to give us knowledge and wisdom to qualify us for the future world of glory, which it reveals. It is designed for the unlearned and the poor, as well as for the learned and the great. It therefore makes no particular degree of attainment in human science a necessary term of salvation, nor does it stoop to teach a system of philosophy. But talents, or a talent, it assures us we have to occupy ; and it commands our exertions for the improvement and happiness of our fellow men. Whatever science is found to be of real advantage to
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the world—whatever knowledge promises to be useful to mankind, the Christian will most carefully cultivate. That he may know more of the greatness and goodness of his Creator, and thus to be inspired with more reverent and exalted sentiments toward this all-perfect Being, and to be made more happy by such sublime contemplations, he is induced to study into the frame and constitution of the Universe, to examine those phenomena, which take place, and to investigate those laws, which operate in the world around him.—Christians have been incited also to acquaint themselves with the history and learning of former ages, that they might be better prepared to defend their religion against the objections of unbelievers: And by their pious, conscientious care, Colleges and Academies have been instituted, which, though they have sometimes unhappily served as a shelter for exploded systems, have generally proved the store-houses of useful and polite literature. —

“ The keys of learning are the ancient languages.” But by none have they been more attended to; than by Christians. For the illustration of scripture allusions and phraseology, the writings of ancient poets and philosophers have been carefully studied; and thus modern times have been benefited by many curious speculations and much useful knowledge, which otherwise would have been lost to the world.—The friends and professors of Christianity have also most carefully studied and best elucidated the important, yet intricate subject of Chronology: And I might add with truth, that they have shown themselves the most zealous supporters of every branch of useful science. “ To Christians the world is indebted for the knowledge

ledge of antiquities—for philology and metaphysical researches—for jurisprudence, and for the best systems of morality and ethics—and for improvements in astronomy and natural philosophy—For such knowledge and for such improvements, the world is obliged principally to Christians : Not to Atheists, nor Deists, some of whom have been the avowed advocates of despotism*.” And certainly, if their plans of education (or rather, of no education) were adopted, man would be the easy slave of tyranny; ignorance and vice would every where prevail, and we should soon sink into a state of barbarism and superstition. —

Whilst we recollect that Christianity has proved a stimulus to scientific researches, and has greatly promoted the interests of learning, it is proper to observe, that learning has been an assistant, in some measure, to Christianity. This idea was suggested above. Not to repeat what has been remarked already, let it be just noted, that men of science and critical erudition are the fittest and most able defenders of the Christian Revelation. Having acquired a knowledge of the history and literature of antiquity, and being acquainted with the chronology of the most important events, which have taken place in ages past, they are prepared to answer the objections, and to remove the difficulties proposed by unbelievers respecting Christianity, and to ascertain those facts, which evince the authenticity of our holy religion. It should also be considered, that where learning is not cultivated, the most absurd opinions are generally found to prevail, and religion degenerates into the phrenzy

* *Dr. Fortin.*

phrenzy of fanaticism or the ridiculousness of superstition. —

Hence we see one great advantage resulting from science. In other respects, it is evidently beneficial to mankind. The mind, enlightened and improved by science, we have new sources of refined satisfaction; our rude, savage manners are softened into a more mild and agreeable deportment, and we are capacitated for more extensive usefulness in the world.

It is education which indicates the superiority of *vindicates* the human mind. By this, its latent faculties are brought into active operation, which otherwise would be useless, like the metallic ore concealed in the deep recesses of the earth. When judiciously conducted, we find it the happy means to humanise, to improve and to enoble man. —

Science is promotive of real dignity of character, and of true refinement of manners. It enlarges the mind, induces a comprehensive mode of thinking, and influences to a manly, liberal and ingenuous deportment. But all the studied forms of ceremony, all the parade of fashionable etiquette, are the mere affectation of refinement. For whatever external polish a person may possess; however he may shine in the gay circle of dissipation, where the grace of motion and gesture command applause; if he have neglected to improve his mind by scientific acquirements, he will not be the instructive, entertaining companion, nor can he enjoy the pleasures of literary discussion. —

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The man of Letters has a source of refined pleasure peculiar to himself, which no misfortune can destroy. In studying the phenomena of nature and the history of mankind, he derives satisfaction greatly superior to the foolish vanity or the sordid pleasure of accumulated wealth, or the unbounded indulgence of merely animal propensities. These studies, as an elegant philosopher of antiquity observed, "afford us nourishment in our youth, consolation and delight in old age; they adorn prosperity, and supply a refuge in adversity; are a source of pleasure at home, and of entertainment abroad, and are company agreeable in our travels and retirements."* —

Learning is also of great importance and advantage to mankind in preserving to them their civil rights and privileges. Liberty and learning afford reciprocal support to each other. History evinces, that liberty promotes free investigation and scientific researches, which, in return, give support to the cause of rational freedom. —

When learning is generally cultivated, and the people are well informed, we seldom find that any individuals presume to usurp authority inconsistent with the equal rights of the whole community. But should any be so madly ambitious, as to attempt to deprive an enlightened people of their liberty, or to exercise oppressive, despotic dominion over them, there is scarcely

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* *Adolescentiam alunt, senectutem oblectant, secundas res ornant, adversis persugium ac solatium præbent, delectant domi, non impediunt foris, pernoctant nobiscum, peregrinantur, rusticantur.*

ly a possibility, that they would succeed. It is ignorance, which supports the usurpation of haughty, insulting tyranny, whose poisonous breath destroys or imbitters every expected enjoyment of life.—The mere instinctive animals of uncultivated nature, and unacquainted with the principles of civil government, mankind are the easy dupes of aspiring despotism. —

Which particular sciences, or which particular mode of education, are most useful, deserves consideration. There are advocates for private education. It is undoubtedly true, that with good instructors, individuals may acquire much useful learning, without resorting to the more public seminaries of science. But in private, there is not that active spirit of emulation, which is so helpful in the acquirement of knowledge. Where numbers are associatedly engaged in the same pursuits, the greater exertions will be made by every one individually to attain to the highest degree of comparative excellence, and all the latent energies of superior genius will be quickened into life.—An easy, manly deportment is also the effect of a public education. —

But it will be said, perhaps, that upon the score of morals, a private education is to be preferred. It must be acknowledged, that at the more public seminaries, the morals of youth are often less pure, than what we find in a retired situation. But this is owing rather to the inattention and neglect of instructors, than to any absolute impossibility of regulating them, arising from the nature of an academical education. —

It is to be regretted, that more particular care is not taken in public seminaries of learning with regard to the morals of youth. By some men, who call themselves the friends of learning, it is supposed best to leave them to follow the impulses of the natural passions, without restraint or advice. But education must be exceedingly deficient, if there be no attention to regulate the moral conduct. In public schools, especially, discipline and morals are of the highest importance. If these be disregarded and neglected in the education of youth, whatever learning they may acquire, they will only be prepared to be more extensively mischievous in society. —

It is also with regret, that we find some persons at the present day more attentive to that mode of education, which can promise only superficial ornament, than to those studies, which lead to solid and useful accomplishments. An acquaintance with the more simple parts of arithmetic and a little geographical information may suffice the man of business; but a knowledge of the ancient languages, of the belles lettres, of mathematics, astronomy, metaphysics and history, is requisite to entitle a man to the appellation of Scholar; nor can he know the great advantages and pleasures of learning, if he be ignorant of these several branches of science. A knowledge of the Greek and Latin tongues, however it may be slighted by the illiterate, is a necessary foundation for solid and critical erudition; it is of high importance in obtaining an accurate acquaintance with our own language and with universal grammar, and it capacitates for improvement in elegant and polite literature.— The belles lettres afford much refined pleasure, by giving

giving exercise to the sprightly powers of the imagination, and fit a person to be pleasingly and ornamentally useful. Mathematics strengthen and invigorate—astronomy enlarges and exalts the mind: metaphysics assist us to determine with accuracy and precision; and history leads us to a knowledge of ourselves, as it were, by shewing us what are the passions, and what the conduct of our fellow men, and it is absolutely necessary to a finished education. —

It is the opinion of some men, that if the people have good common schools among them, as the law enjoins, and a *very* few public seminaries, where all the higher branches of science may be acquired, other literary institutions are unnecessary. But if we admit in general the utility of learning, and if it be thought proper to multiply the means of obtaining knowledge, that it may be acquired in the easiest possible way, we must conclude, that all well-regulated institutions for the diffusion of science are really beneficial to the community.—There are many people, who cannot afford their children a university education, who would yet wish them to be better instructed than they are at the common schools. Several sciences are taught at those seminaries *appropriately* termed Academies, which will adorn and improve our youth. Though all the learning is not acquired, which might be gained in a University, yet as greater literary excellence is attainable in them, than by the more common means of instruction, in inferior schools, they are to be encouraged from a view to general advantage and utility. —

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To every one, who wishes the improvement and happiness of the people, it must afford great satisfaction to reflect, that there are many means adopting to diffuse useful information, and that seminaries of learning are establishing in various parts of our country.* Among the many instances of this kind, we recollect with pleasure the literary institution in this place, and feel peculiarly interested in its prosperity. We hope the laudable purposes of those, who have been instrumental in founding it, will be fully effected, and that this part of our country will find it to be a means of real improvement. —

Many pleasing reflections occur to the mind upon the present occasion. We see improvements constantly taking place. Until very lately, the part of the country which we inhabit, was a wild, unfruitful desert. It now wears a pleasant appearance, and *blessings*

* In 1795, the General Assembly of the State passed a bill for erecting a College in Brunswick, by the name of Bowdoin College. The endowment by the Legislature is very respectable. The land given is valued at 50,000, and by some, at 80,000 dollars. Hon. J. BOWDOIN of Boston is a generous benefactor to the College. His donations, in money and land, already amount to nearly 10,000 dollars.—A respectable building will probably soon be erected, and preparations made for the reception of Students. —

There are also five incorporated academics in the district of Maine. The whole number in the State is thirteen. Most of them have been established within the three last years.—Of those in Maine, Hallowsell academy was the first incorporated, though two others, one at Berwick and one at Fryeburg, were first prepared for the reception of students. It is but lately, that the Legislature have resolved the incorporation of an academy at Machias and at Portland. These undoubtedly will soon be carried into effect. —

soms with all the beauties of industrious cultivation.* Busy, enterprizing commerce, now frequents these once unwelcome shores—we view her flowing canvass whitening over the fertile banks of yonder placid stream, and by her friendly aid, we enjoy many rich blessings of distant, foreign climes.—Ignorance and barbarism here lately spread a dismal gloom; science and the useful arts of civilization succeed, to improve and polish man.—Here superstition once held her awful reign, and savage man, with horrid cries and frantic gestures, paid frightful homage to imaginary gods: Now the joyful sound of the gospel is heard; its heavenly light appears to guide and bless mankind, and true spiritual incense is offered in the name of the only true Mediator to the only true and adorable Jehovah. —

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* Fifteen years ago, there were very few settlements on the Kennebeck as high up the river as Hallowell—only some scattering huts with an acre or two of the adjoining land cultivated. There are now settlements about 100 miles from the mouth of the River. In many places, the land is well cultivated—and (excepting 15 or 20 miles upon the sea-coast in some places where the face of the ground is uneven; though here the soil is strong and rich and affords fine pasturing) in general, the land, not only contiguous to this river, but throughout this part of the state, is very excellent, and promises to be equally productive as any part of America.—Hallowell, which is nearly 40 miles from the sea, is the highest town on the River, in which there is any proper navigation (small boats pass far above.) In this town there are two separate, compact settlements contiguous to the river, in the midst of an agricultural and trading country: these are distant about 3 miles from each other. The lowest called the Hook, where the academy stands, contains the greatest number of buildings (about 70 dwelling houses) and is the most rapidly increasing. It promises to be a place of very considerable trade and importance.

Upon recollection of the many improvements, which have been made in our country, I felicitate you, my hearers, most feelingly. Compared to the circumstances of those, who lived a few years since, our situation is greatly meliorated. But much yet remains to be done. Agriculture demands more particular attention. Our country is capable of additional improvements in this respect. And for all our experiments and exertions, we may expect to be richly compensated. —

The improvement and happiness of the people will be yet greatly promoted by multiplying the means of instruction, by providing more carefully for the education of youth, and by introducing teachers of religion into all the settled parts of the country. — In these respects, due care and attention have not been bestowed. But it certainly very much depends upon this circumstance, whether the people in general be really improved, and continue to be truly happy. We should not be content with some partial improvements. The noble example of our pious ancestors is worthy our imitation. The first settlers in Massachusetts were the zealous friends of learning and religion : To their praise be it mentioned. Let all persons of influence direct their exertions to increase the means of religious instruction, and of all useful information. We may then justly expect, that our country will be more and more a habitation of righteousness and peace, and a land which God will delight to bless. And whilst, with satisfaction, we observe the progress of useful science and the prevalence of religious truths, and in pleasing anticipation are carried forward to that expected time, when the
 predictions

predictions of ancient, inspired prophets, respecting future glorious, happy scenes, shall be fully accomplished, let us be careful, individually, to obey the blessed gospel of Jesus Christ, that we may be qualified for the exalted service of God and the Lamb in heaven, throughout the endless ages of eternity. —

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